

## **Creating a Facilitative Environment for Genetic Research: The Central Role of Public Trust**

*Margaret Otlowski*

### **Introduction**

This chapter explores the role of public trust in maximising the health potential of genetic research. The positive relationship between research and health is historically well established; medical and scientific research over past decades has become a vital part in improving the health of the population. The focus of this chapter is on human genetic research, which is playing an increasingly important role and holds great promise for advancing our understanding of genetically based disease and the interaction between genetic and environmental factors. The significance of public trust in the health and research environment has been highlighted in recent times by some spectacular breaches. For example, in the United Kingdom, the Alder Hey Hospital scandal involving the removal of organs from children's bodies without the parents' consent, has led to concerns about the resulting erosion of trust in the medical profession and governance of biomedical research (Liddell and Hall, 2005).

### **Human Genetic Research and the Emerging Role of Genetic Databanks**

Human genetic research typically entails the use of genetic samples and/or genetic information. Genetic research can reveal

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